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A SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT OF THE RIGHT HONOVRABLE *WILLIAM*, LORD Vicount SAY and SEALE,

Mr. of his Majesties Court of Wards and Liveries, and one of his Majesties most Honourable Privie Councell,

Upon the Bill against Bishops power in civill affaires and Courts of Iudicature.

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A Speech of the Right Honourable WILLIAM, Lord Vicount Say and *Seale*, one of his Majesties most Honourable privie Councell, spoken in Parliament upon the Bill against the Bishops.

MY LORDS,

I Shall not need to begin as high as *Adam* in answer to what hath beene drawne downe from thence by a Bishop concerning this question, for that which is pertinent to it will onely be what concernes Bishops as they are ministers of the Gospell, what was before (being of another nature) can give no rule to this. The question that will lye before your Lordships in passing of this bill is not whether Episcopacie (I meane this Hierarchicall Episcopacy which the world now holds forth to us) shall be taken away Roote and branch, but whether those exuberant and superfluous branches, which draw away the sap from the tree, and divert it from the right and proper use where-by it becomes unfruitfull, shall be cut off, as they use to pluck up suckers from the Roote. The question will be no more but this, whether Bishops shall be reduced to what they were

The Bishop of *Lincoln*.

were in their first advancement over the presbyters (which although it were but a humane device for the Remedie of Scisme, yet were they in those times least offensive) or continue still with the addition of such things, as their owne ambition, and the ignorance and superstition of succeeding times did adde thereunto, and which are now continued for severall politicke ends. Things heterogeneall and inconsistent with their calling and function as they are ministers of the Gospell, and thereupon such, as ever have beene, and ever will be, hurtfull to themselves, and make them hurtfull to others, in the times and places where they are continued. And these things alone this bill takes away, that is their offices and places in Courts of Iudicature, and their imployments by Obligation of office in civill affaires: I shall insist upon this, and shew first how these things hurt themselves, and secondly, how they have made, and ever will make them hurtfull to others; They themselves are hurt thereby in their consciences, and in their credits; In their consciences, by seeking or admitting things which are inconsistent with that function and office which God hath set them apart unto. They are separated unto a speciall worke, and men must take heed how they misimploy things dedicated and set apart to the service of God; They are called to preach the Gospell, and set apart to the worke of the ministery, and the Apostle saith, who is sufficient for these things, shewing that this requireth the whole man, and all is too little, therefore for them to seeke, or take other offices, which shall require and tye them to imploy their time and studies in the affaires of this world, will draw a guilt upon them, as being inconsistent with that which God doth call them and set them apart unto. In this respect our Saviour hath expresly prohibited it, telling his Apostles that they should not Lord it over their Brethren, nor exercise Jurisdiction over them, as was vsed in civill governments among the Heathen: They were called gracious Lords, and exercised Jurisdiction as Lords over

others

others, and ſure they might lawfully doe ſo: but to the Miniſters of the Goſpell our Saviour gives this Rule, *it ſhall not be ſo done by you*; If ye ſtrive for greatneſſe, he ſhall be the greateſt that is the greateſt ſervant to the reſt; therefore in another place he ſaith, He that putteth his hand to the Plow and looketh backe to the things of this world is not fit for the kingdome of God, that *is* the preaching of the Goſpell, as it is uſually called. To be thus withdrawne by intangling themſelves with the affaires of this life, by the neceſſity and duty of an Office received from men, from the diſcharge of that Office which God hath called them unto, brings a woe upon them; Woe unto me, ſaith the Apoſtle, if I preach not the Goſpel, what doth he meane? If I preach not once a quarter, or once a yeare in the Kings Chappell? No, he himſelfe interpreteth it; Preach the Word, be inſtant, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, rebuke, exhort, or inſtruct, with all long ſuffering and doctrine: he that hath an office, muſt attend upon his office, eſpecially this of the miniſtery. The practice of the Apoſtles is anſwerable to the direction, and doctrine of our Saviour. There never was, nor will be, men of ſo great abilities and gifts as they were indued withall, yet they thought it ſo inconſiſtent with their Callings, to take places of Iudicature in civill matters, and ſecular affaires and imployments upon them, that they would not admit of the care and diſtraction that a buſineſſe farre more agreeable to their Callings, then theſe, would caſt upon them, and they give the reaſon of it, in the ſixth of the *Acts*. It is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the word of God and ſerve Tables. And againe, when they had appointed them to chooſe men fit for that buſineſſe, they inſtitute an office rather for taking care of the poore, then they by it would be diſtracted from the principall worke of their Calling, and then ſhew how they ought to imploy themſelues; But we (ſaid they) will give our ſelves continually to prayer, and to the miniſtry of the Word;

Did the Apoſtles, men of extraordinary gifts, thinke it unreaſonable for them to be hindred from giving themſelves continually to preaching the Word and prayer, by taking care for the tables of the poore Widowes, and can the Biſhops now thinke it reaſonable or lawfull for them to contend for ſitting at Councell Tables to governe States, to turne States-men in ſtead of Church-men, to ſit in the higheſt Courts of Iudicature, and to bee imployed in making lawes for civill polities and government? If they ſhall bee thought fit to ſit in ſuch places, and will undertake ſuch imployments, they muſt not ſit there as ignorant men, but muſt be knowing men in buſineſſes of State, and underſtand the Rules and Lawes of government, and thereby both their time and ſtudies muſt be neceſſarily diverted from that which God hath called them unto; And this ſure is much more unlawfull for them to admit of, then that which the Apoſtles rejected as a diſtraction unreaſonable for them to bee interrupted by. The doctrine of the Apoſtles is agreeable to their practice herein, for *Paul* when hee inſtructeth *Timothy* for the worke of the miniſtery preſſeth this argument from the example of a good ſouldier, no man that warreth intangleth himſelfe with the affaires of the world: So that I conclude, That which by the commandement of our Saviour, by the practice and doctrine of the Apoſtles, and I may adde by the Canons of ancient Councels, grounded thereupon, is prohibited to the Miniſters of the Goſpell, and ſhewed to be ſuch a diſtraction unto them from their Callings and function, as will bring a woe upon them, and is not reaſonable for them to admit of; If they ſhall notwithſtanding intangle themſelves withall, and enter into, it will bring a guilt upon their ſoules, and hurt them in reſpect of their conſciences.

In the next place it doth blemiſh them, and ſtrike them

them in their credit, ſo farre from truth is that poſition which they deſire to poſſeſſe the world withall, that unleſſe they may have theſe outward trappings of worldly pompe added to the miniſtry, that Calling will grow into contempt, and bee deſpiſed. The truth *is*, theſe things caſt contempt upon them in the eyes of men. They gaine them cappe and courteſie, but they have caſt them out of the conſciences of men; and the reaſon is this, every thing is eſteemed as it is eminent in its owne proper excellencie; the eye in ſeeing, not in hearing; the eare in hearing, not in ſpeaking; The one would bee rather monſtrous then comely, the other *is* ever acceptable being proper; ſo is it with them, their proper excellency is ſpirituall, the denyall of the world with the pompe and preferments, and imployments thereof, this they ſhould teach and practiſe, but when they contrary hereunto ſeeke after a worldly excellency like the great men of the world, and to rule and dominere as they doe contrary to our Saviours precept, *Vos autem non ſic*, but it ſhall not bee ſo amongſt you, in ſtead of honour and eſteeme, they have brought upon themſelves in the hearts of the people that contempt and *odium* which they now lye under, and that juſtly and neceſſarily, becauſe the world ſeeth that they preferre a worldly excellency, and runne after it, and contend for it, before their owne, which being ſpirituall is farre more excellent, and which being proper to the Miniſtrie is that alone which will put a value and eſteeme upon them that are of that Calling. As theſe things hurt themſelves in their conſciences and credit, ſo have they, and, if they bee continued, ſtill will make them hurtfull to others; The reaſon is, becauſe they breake out of their owne orbe, and move irregularly, there is a curſe upon their leaving of their owne place. The heavenly bodies while they keepe within their owne ſpheres give light and comfort to the world,

But

But if they ſhould breake out, and fall from their regular and proper motions, they would ſet the world on fire: ſo have theſe done while they kept themſelves to the worke of their miniſtery alone, and gave themſelves to prayer, and the miniſtry of the Word, according to the example of the Apoſtles, the world received the greateſt benefits by them, they were the light, and life thereof; But when their ambition caſt them downe like ſtarres from heaven to earth, and they did grow once to be advanced above their brethren, I doe appeale to all who have beene verſed in the ancient Eccleſiaſticall ſtories, or moderne Hiſtories, whether they have not beene the common incendiaries of the Chriſtian world, never ceaſing from contention one with another about the precedency of their Sees, and Churches, Excommunicating one another, drawing Princes to bee parties with them, and thereby caſting them into bloody warres. Their ambition, and intermedling with ſecular affaires and State buſineſſe, hath beene the cauſe of ſhedding more Chriſtian blood then any thing elſe in the Chriſtian world, and this no man can deny that is verſed in Hiſtory; But we need not goe out of our owne Kingdome for examples of their inſolency and cruelty; when they had a dependency upon the Pope, and any footing thereby out of the Land, there were never any that carryed themſelves with ſo much ſcorne and inſolencie towards the Princes of this Kingdome, as they have done.

Lincolne. Two of them the Biſhop that laſt ſpake hath named, but inſtances of many more may bee given whereof there would bee no end. Although the Pope bee caſt off, yet now there is another inconvenience no leſſe prejudiciall to the Kingdome by their ſitting in this Houſe, and that is, they have ſuch an abſolute dependency upon the King, that they ſit not here as freemen. That which is requiſite to freedome, is to be void of hopes and feares; Hee that can lay downe theſe is a free-man, and will be ſo in this

this house; But for the Bishops as the case stands with them, it is not likely they will lay aside their hopes, greater Bishoprieks being still in expectancy: and for their feares they cannot lay them downe, since their places and seats in Parliament are not invested in them by blood, and so hereditary, but by annexation of a Barony to their office, and depending upon that office, so that they may be deprived of their office, and thereby of their places, at the Kings pleasure; they doe not so much as sit here *dum bene se gesserint*, as the Judges now by your Lordships petition to the King have their places granted them, but at will and pleasure, and therefore as they were all excluded by *Edw.* the first as long as hee pleased, and Lawes made *excluso Clero*, so may they be by any King at his pleasure in like manner, they must needs therefore bee in an absolute dependencie upon the Crowne, and thereby at devotion for their votes, which how prejudiciall it hath beene, and will be, to this house I need not say.

I have now shewed your Lordships how hurtfull to themselves and others these things which the bill would take away have beene, I will onely answer some Objections which I have met withall, and then crave your pardon for troubling you so long.

Object. 1. It will be said that they have beene very antient.

2. That they are established by law.

3. That it may be an infringement to the priviledges of the House of Peeres, for the house of Commons to send up a Bill to take away some of their members.

To these three objections the answer will be easie.

1. To the first, Antiquity is no good plea, for that which is by experience found to be hurtfull, the longer it hath done hurt the more cause there is now to remove it, that it may doe no more, besides other irregularities are as antient which have beene thought fit to bee

redreſſed, and this is not ſo antient, but that it may truly be ſaid, *Non fuit ſic ab initio.*

2. For being eſtabliſhed by Law, the law-makers have the ſame power, and the ſame charge, to alter old lawes inconvenient, as to make new that are neceſſary.

3. For priviledge of the Houſe, it can be no breach of it, for either eſtate may propoſe to other by way of bill what they conceive to bee for publicke good, and they have power reſpectively of accepting or refuſing.

There are two other Objections which may ſeeme to have more force, but they will receive ſatisfactory anſwers.

The one is, that if they may remove Biſhops, they may aſwell next time remove Barons and Earles: for anſwer.

The Reaſon is not the ſame, the one ſitting by an Honour inveſted in their blood, and hereditary, which though it be in the King to grant alone, yet being once granted he cannot take away; the other ſitting by a Barony depending upon an Office which may bee taken away, for if they be deprived of their office they ſit not.

2. Their ſitting is not ſo eſſentiall, for Lawes have beene, and may be made, they being all excluded, but it can never be ſhewed, that ever there were Lawes made by the King, and them, the Lords and Earles excluded.

Obj. 2. The other objection is this, that this Bill alters the foundation of this houſe, and innovations which ſhake foundations are dangerous.

Anſw. I anſwer firſt, that if there ſhould bee an error in the foundation, when it ſhall be found, and the maſter builders be met together, they may, nay, they ought rather to amend it, then to ſuffer it to runne on ſtill, to the prejudice and danger of the whole ſtructure.

2. Secondly, I ſay this is not fundamentall to this Houſe,

House, for it hath stood without them, and done all that appertaines to the power thereof without them, yea, they being wholly excluded, and that which hath beene done for a time at the Kings pleasure may be done with as little danger for a longer time, and when it appeares to be fit and for publick good, not onely may, but ought to be done altogether by the supreme Power.

FINIS.